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There is a large central building, to contain a refracting telescope of about 26-inch aperture, other smaller telescopes, library and working-rooms, offices and computing rooms, accompanied by other buildings to contain meridian instruments and a reflecting telescope of diameter between 40 and 50 inches. Excellent progress has been made with the buildings and instruments; the staff of astronomers and assistants has been greatly increased; and this institution should be one of the most fruitful of observatories. A small refractor, moved from the old observatory, is already securing notable results by virtue of a photo-electric cell photometer attached to its eye end. At the close of the Potsdam visit many astronomers went to Neubabelsberg and were most favorably impressed by what they saw.

I sailed homeward on August 12th, with the knowledge that German astronomy is as wide awake as German commerce and German education.

PLANETARY PHENOMENA FOR NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER, 1913.

By Malcolm McNeill.

PHASES OF THE MOON, PACIFIC TIME.

First Quarter	Nov. 5,	$10^h\ 34^m$ A.M.	First Quarter..	Dec. 5,	$6^h\ 59^m$ A.M.
Full Moon ..	" 13,	3 11 P.M.	Full Moon	" 13,	7 0 A.M.
Last Quarter..	" 20,	11 56 P.M	Last Quarter .	" 20,	8 16 A.M.
New Moon ..	" 27,	5 41 P.M.	New Moon ...	" 27,	6 59 A.M.

The Sun reaches the winster solstice, the point farthest south from the equator, on December 22d, about 3 A. M. Pacific time.

Mercury is an evening star on November 1st, reaching greatest east elongation on that date. The elongation is an average one, 23° 34′, but other things conspire to make conditions for visibility very poor, and the planet sets less than an hour after sunset, making it practically impossible for naked-eye view. Eastern elongation in the autumn generally afford a poor opportunity for visibility of *Mercury* owing to the circumstance that the planet is a considerable distance south of the

Sun at this time, and this condition is accentuated by the fact that the planet on November 1st is at a point in its orbit as far as possible below the ecliptic, the apparent path of the Sun among the stars. After November 1st the planet rapidly approaches the Sun, passing inferior conjunction and becoming a morning star on November 22d. It then moves rapidly away from the Sun and reaches greatest west elongation on December 10th. By December 1st it rises nearly an hour and one half before sunrise, and this interval increases to an hour and three quarters during the month. It is therefore in good position for naked-eye view on any clear morning in the eastern twilight. On December 2d it is in conjunction with *Venus,* passing 1° 35′ north of the latter.

Venus is still a morning star, but is drawing closer to the Sun, and toward the end of December will not be an easy object to view. On November 1st it rises a little more than two hours before sunrise, and this interval diminishes to about forty minutes by December 31st. It will reach superior conjunction with the Sun on February 11, 1914.

Mars is now getting into good position for evening observation, rising at about half-after nine on November, and only a few minutes after sunset on December 21st. It is in the constellation *Gemini,* and up to November 27th it moves eastward about 4°. It then begins its westward or retrograde motion, moving about 8° up to December 31st, on a line somewhat to the north of its path when moving eastward. On December 31st it will be about 3° north of the position it occupied on October 21st. Comparison of the positions of *Mars* from October to the end of December with respect to *Castor* and *Pollux,* the principal stars in *Gemini,* will give a good idea of direct and retrograde motion of a planet, as *Mars* moves forward and back on lines not far south of the two stars. The planet will nearly double in brightness during the two months, and will reach its maximum at the end of December. On this last day of the year the planet will attain its minimum distance from the Earth, although it will not reach opposition until January 5, 1914. The present opposition is by no means a favorable one, the least distance from the Earth being about fifty-eight million miles, while the distance at the opposition of 1909, September 24th, was only a little more than thirty-six millions. This makes the brightness of *Mars* at the present opposition scarcely more than one third that which it had at the opposition of 1909. The distance of *Mars* from the Earth at the next two oppositions will be a little greater than for the present opposition, but after these the opposition distance will gradually diminish until the opposition of August 28, 1924, when the least distance will be less than that of 1909.

Jupiter is still an evening star, but is gradually drawing quite close to the Sun. On November 1st it sets a little before nine o'clock, and on December 31st at a little before six, only a little more than an hour after sunset. Owing to its great brightness, however, it will be an easy object to see until after the close of December. Its motion among the stars is quite rapid, from *Sagittarius* toward *Capricorn*, about 13°

Saturn is in fine position for observation. On November 1st it rises about two hours after sunset and comes to opposition on December 7th, when it is above the horizon practically the entire night. During the two months it moves westward about 5° in the constellation *Taurus*, and at the end of December is about 4° east and the same distance north of *Aldebaran*, the brightest star of the constellation.

Uranus is in the western sky in the evening, a little higher up than *Jupiter*. It sets at about 10:30 P. M. on November 1st and at about 7 P. M. on December 31st. It moves a short distance eastward in the constellation *Capricorn*, reaching by the end of December about the same position it held during the late summer.

Neptune rises about 10 P. M. on November 1st and at about 6 P. M. on December 31st. It is moving a little westward in *Gemini*.